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BARRINGTON

March 4, 2011

The Honorable John L. Mica
Chairman, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I would like to express my thanks to you and your colleagues for the effort you made to be in Illinois on February 20 to conduct the regional "listening session" on matters related to reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU. I believe your willingness to extend an ear to local elected officials in determining what the problems are in the current framework, and openness to hearing how we might focus solutions will result in a final bill that expedites the needed investment in high-priority transportation infrastructure projects that are so critical to this nation's future prosperity.

There was much talk at the DuPage Airport of the necessity to streamline the federal NEPA approval process for transportation-related projects. I heartily concur with that sentiment as it will save time and money for all. If there are clear expectations of desired environmental outcomes for transportation projects at the outset, the process can be streamlined because guiding criteria are in place, versus the shotgun approach of assessing all issues with no direction as to what to do about problems as they become clear. I would also concur with the need to reduce the overall number of distinct funding programs. This will streamline the process and allow the most critical projects to be prioritized for sufficient funding.

Finally, I do want to thank you for your suggestion, in response to my comments on road-from-rail grade separation projects, to review the RRIF program for its use in funding the type of infrastructure projects that have been necessitated by Canadian National Railway's (CN's) purchase of the EJ&E rail line. Unfortunately, as it is now structured RRIF does not appear to be an option for us as it is a fund for **railroad infrastructure** projects and not the road-to-railway grade separation projects ("**highway**" projects) that are the issue of concern to Barrington and the other TRAC communities.

Furthermore, even if RRIF were made available for highway/rail projects, since RRIF is a loan program and not a grant program, the TRAC communities would be faced with a financing conundrum since we are not in a position to generate revenues for a grade separation project. Additionally, providing a taxpayer subsidy for infrastructure required by a railroad's business decision is difficult to

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support. Perhaps if Congress chooses to restructure the RRIF loan program for projects such as the one in Barrington, and CN was then held responsible for the 35-year loan payments based on the earnings the EJ&E will generate for CN, RRIF could be an option to fund the highway/rail grade separation project required in Barrington. We have touched upon the RRIF program and other issues – as well as offered specific policy recommendations – in the enclosed written statement TRAC has prepared for the Committee's record.

Again, thank you for your receptivity to hearing from the public on this critical issue and your openness to receiving written testimony from all transportation stakeholders.

With Warm Regards,



Karen Darch
President, Village of Barrington
& TRAC Co-Chair

Copies To:

The Honorable Bill Shuster,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials
The Honorable Randy Hultgren
The Honorable Daniel Lipinski
The Honorable Adam Kinzinger